Human Events *A Weekly Analysis for the American Citizen*
Editorial Office 1710 Rhode Island Ave., N. W., WASHINGTON 6, D. C. *Telephone* NATIONAL 2066
VOL. VII, No. 39, *Issue Number* 348, SEPTEMBER 27, 1950 *Editor:* FRANK C. HANIGHEN

OCT 1950

LEFTIES IN BUSINESS

by Harry Serwer

I ran into Joe in the subway. He was reading the August issue of Masses and Mainstream. As he got out at Forty-second Street, he handed me the magazine and jeered, "Here, you reactionary, read the real truth about Korea." I read it; the old Commie line; Form No. 62, with names changed. Quotes from Amerasia and the Institute of Pacific Relations. As plausible as a copper's excuse for taking a bookie's sawbuck.

Joe is an opulent business man. His 1949 volume vaulted $5,000,000 -- with something to spare. At the drop of the hat, Joe will tell you how dispassionate and realistic he was in turning an honest dollar. He coldly evaluated everything -- politics, Society, spiritual problems. He says so himself.

Joe lives well. A house in the country and a Park Avenue apartment. He never heard of any car but the Cadillac. No question about it: he is well-heeled. He made most of his take-home dough in the Fabulous Twenties; when taxes were peanuts and Calvin Coolidge had turned the Government red to a deep, dark purple.

Joe took a nose-dive in the Depression. He thought Hoover had a heluva nerve to whittle him down to only three Cadillacs! Where was everybody? Where was the savior? This country needed a dictator who would put everything to rights. Joe certainly was being realistic -- like a peasant shying away from a gypsy hex.

But, Joe did all right for himself after Roosevelt stowed the wide end of the lend-lease cornucopia into his jeans. From then on, Roosevelt was Little Lord Fauntleroy with the monkey-suit.

II

I remember -- back in the middle Thirties -- when Joe invited me to break bread with him and scratch up his Tiffany silver. Right after the crepes suzettes ("like they serve at the Lafayette, don't you think?" cooed his wife), Joe shoved a skinny pamphlet under my nose and said, "Here's the new Soviet Constitution."

I read it. No escapist could have plowed through a Who-Dunnit in less time. "Who wrote it?" I asked. "Benchley?"

Joe was startled. "Listen, you dope!" he hollered. And then he sounded off like Vishinsky -- except that Joe believed every word he

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said. When he ran out of breath, Mrs. Joe helped out with a few words; and then another guest, a doctor, began to prognosticate.

I learned plenty that night: there never was and never will be another country like democratic Russia; it was Paradise on earth; the Russky kids oozed butter and soft-boiled eggs; every moujik had two cars in the barn and three pigs in the poke. And what did America have before Franklin Delano started us on the Exodus from Egypt? Grapes of Wrath . . . and Wall Street . . . and imperialism . . . and more Wall Street. Good old Franklin. Good old Eleanor, and Hopkins, and Ickes, and Tommy the Cork, and Cohen the Colossal. Joe was as coldly realistic as a towel left in the deep-freeze. With such leadership we simply cannot miss the Land of Plenty.

There are a multitude of Joes in this country. The sum total of their procurement, production and distribution runs into the fabulous millions. They're in the hard goods business and in the soft goods business. They run large department stores. Their pay rolls are delivered in trucks by men whose hands are on their holsters. The discount bankers take their notes in six and seven figures, and the interest is less than the Treasury gives you on your Government bond. They even float public issues. They <u>are</u> Wall Street. They <u>are</u> the Money Crowd they rant about.

And, of course, they live well. They always pick up the fat checks in the "right" places.

III

The Joes always voted for Roosevelt, and then they moved in on Truman. They read the "liberal" magazines and newspapers. They clip the gush-editorials from the <u>New York Times</u> and the <u>Post</u>, and send them to the "renegade reactionaries" with whom they do business; they are all for getting these benighted millionaires on their penitent bellies at the mourner's bench.

The Joes never read Charles A. Beard, but they know he was a dirty "Fascist" and a liar; they don't have to read him to know that. For John T. Flynn or Harry Elmer Barnes they have not found names low enough. They believe that Nock is some game about conundrums. But, Sherwood and Gunther on Roosevelt! Brother, Shakespeare was a bum by comparison. And the Joes would not be found dead with any "Fascist" carrying a Hearst, a Scripps-Howard or McCormick newspaper.

The Joes -- who contribute heavily to phony names fronting for the Reds -- will choke on the intake if you won't go along; especially if

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they are giving you business. You don't like their politics? So, what? So, they take their business to Uriah Heep.

These Joes are a danger to the country. They throw their weight around; and because their accounts payable amount to a monthly mailbag of checks, that weight can get awfully heavy. They are the bourgeois renegades, and without a bourgeoisie you can't have a republic. They are not the have-nots seeking a messiah to relieve them of the temporary pressure of economic determinism. They are not the cynical provocateurs building for themselves a commissar's nest for the day when the Revolution comes. They are the rotten apples in the middle-class barrel.

IV

How did Joe get that way? Your guess is as good as mine. A psychiatrist would delve into his youth. Diapered or short-pants, Joe came over in a steerage. Pop and Mom, fleeing from poverty and persecution, had somehow got by the border. Pop knew the score: he knew all about Marx, the unread Messiah, from his fellow-sufferers; he knew that Marx was something of a St. George, who would put the sword to the parasitical royalty from which he had fled and then take care of its American prototype. And Joe lapped up this propaganda with adolescent relish. He inhaled it with every drag on the Karl Marx cigarettes (no decent proletarian would smoke any other brand those days) that he snitched from the old man.

But, I don't go for that psycho lead. It's as wet as a clubhouse in local option. For, Joe is not exclusively a New York phenomenon. I've found him in Boston (with a Mayflower pedigree); on the Philadelphia "main line", with lineage running back to William Penn; in Dallas, with a Texas drawl; and many other places where Babbitt has taken on new guises.

Joe can better be interpreted in terms of his sheckels; they did something to him, and Joe, being gregarious, had to have a "set" -- cronies who had acquired a similar number of sheckels and a similar package of political ideas.

When his gang went in for Art in the What-Are-We-Here-For era, Joe and his wife didn't let anybody outdo them in Open Housing; they poured soup and gin into every grifter from the local Bohemia -- including the characters on page seven of the Great American Novel. Those were great days for Joe; he'll never forget the night -- at Polly Adler's -- when he argued the superiority of Rhapsody in Blue over the Choral Ninth. Joe really believed it, because he got all the facts of life from the "right" people.

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Can anything be done about Joe? Sure! Let him alone and he'll come home dragging his tail behind him. Suppose he leaves an Augean stable for the rest of us to clean up. In his best manner he'll say "Oops, Sorry!" And then he'll fall in line, because he'll recognize economic determinism when it slaps him in the bank basket.

Joe does not worry about the enemies he makes among the conservatives, isolationists and Republicans because he still has his crowd to warm his ego. But, one of these days his best customer -- a guy who believes in George Washington and Grover Cleveland -- will come in. And Joe will forget to keep his mouth shut. And the best customer will say: "If you have that little integrity about your country, your product must be just as lousy. I'm staying away from you until you get in the groove." And Joe will say: "What kind of an argument is that? What has my politics to do with the quality of my merchandise?" And the best customer will counter with: "That's what I'm asking you? I heard about your cancelling an order for Framus because you objected to the Framus Company dough-nating to America First. What's sauce for the goose is grease for the gander."

That night Joe will do an infinity of thinking. He'll wonder how many others he has alienated -- people who don't warn you when your king is vulnerable. He'll remember that the last time he went to the bank to have his note re-discounted the president did not inquire about Mrs. Joe's health. If a coward dies a thousand deaths, a six-figure note can die a million.

Pretty soon, Joe is softened up. Boycott by his best customer and the snub of his favorite banker will go a long way toward his education. He will suddenly realize that when the guy with the Red Plume stalks in, Joe's business and his sheckels are in jeopardy. That Joe will be the first to be rubbed out -- because, indeed, he is nothing but a kulak. When he realizes that, thanks to a little business ostracism, look out! He'll knock you over in his beeline to the corral.

Harry Serwer operates a successful advertising agency and merchandise counselling service in New York City. His knowledge of the fellow travellers in the higher brackets comes from close association.

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Not Merely Gossip *A Supplement to* Human Events Vol. VII, No. 39

By Frank C. Hanighen September 27, 1950

DEAL: RED "CONCESSIONS": Talk grows of an imminent appeasement of Soviet Russia.

Now, with Acheson firmly seated in his post, he can maneuver toward the objective to which he has long dedicated himself -- a complete sell-out of Nationalist China and Formosa, recognition of Communist China and the seating of the latter Government's representative in the UN Council. Indeed, it is not difficult to read such an eventuality between the lines of news dispatches from Lake Success.

The hypothesis -- that an appeasement deal is on the way, if not already secretly negotiated in principle -- is based on some signs and portents.

The failure of Moscow to send large bodies of Chinese Communist troops to attack our Inchon bridgehead is interpreted, not as over-all Soviet military weakness, but simply as a desire to win vital objectives by the cheaper method of negotiation.

In such a deal, Moscow could withdraw the Korean puppet forces to north of the 38th Parallel, toss in some minor concessions such as seating of Eire, Portugal and even Spain in the UN, but meanwhile win the rubber by obtaining recognition of Communist China and seating it in the UN. Whether or not Acheson can make some such an arrangement palatable to the American people is a question.

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DEAL: QUID PRO QUO: American appeasement of Russia, along these lines, might be connected with the election campaign. The "Foster Letter" has caused much stir among students of international Communist tactics. This letter, signed by William Z. Foster, Chairman of the U.S. Communist Party, was recently published in the official organ of the Cominform. It suggested the possibility of a new "Popular Front" and of support by Communists of Left Wing governments supported by Labor, which operate "within the framework of a bourgeois state". The Truman Administration seems an obvious candidate for this "honor".

It is recalled that the Party line switched in the 1948 election at the time of Truman's plan to send Justice Vinson to Moscow, and the unforgettable "I like old Joe" remark. Likewise, the bellwether of the fellow travellers, Congressman Marcantonio, withdrew his support of Henry Wallace's candidature. Some observers believe that Communist backing for Truman in '48 swung some vital states and Congressional constituencies to the Democratic column, thereby insuring Truman's re-election.

Applying this precedent to the current Congressional election campaign, some political observers envisage action by the Communist-dominated American Labor Party which would swing its 200,000 votes in New York to the Democratic Party or some of its candidates, for instance Senator Lehman. And Communist support of the Truman "bourgeois" but "anti-monopolistic" Administration (to quote the Cominform piece) might be sufficient in some industrial constituencies to defeat the GOP candidates.

Indeed, some attribute Truman's veto of the anti-subversive legislation -- accompanied by one of the longest veto messages in our history -- to this appeasement plan. Truman wants the Red support. The McCarran-Mundt-Nixon bill is designed to strike primarily at "crypto-Communists", who are much more valuable to the Communist fifth column than are avowed members of the Party. Thus, two interests would

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meet -- the Democratic Administration, desirous of winning the elections, and the Communist Party, desperately seeking to protect its really effective secret cadres. It would be a natural deal.

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MacARTHUR: In newspapers which had the effrontery to describe the Inchon landing as executed by "United Nations Forces" (with only bottom-of-column references to MacArthur and the Marines), it is no wonder that no investigation has been made of one of the most revealing stories of the past fortnight.

According to some who ought to know, this is it: the White House, together with Generals Bradley and Collins, were hatching a scheme to "get rid of" MacArthur. The idea under consideration was to create a new military position, "Commander of Forces at the Front", or something similar, and fill it with General Mark Clark or some other commander.

MacArthur, under this plan, would remain as Commander in Japan; in short, he would be shelved. The attendant explanation would be that MacArthur had to be relegated to such a back-of-the-lines position because of age and infirmity. We do not know, but we can imagine, the sour reaction in the White House, as reports came of MacArthur landing at Inchon at the head of troops.

It is now widely believed that MacArthur sold the reluctant Chief of Staff, Collins, on the Inchon bridgehead expedition. The White House, too, was not enthusiastic because of fears that the Chinese Communists would intervene and overrun not only the new beachhead, but the southern beachhead (Pusan) as well -- in a major national disaster. MacArthur is said to have answered this objection by saying that we had better know once and for all whether or not the threat of the Chinese Communists was real. A brave gesture -- a courageous gamble.

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DEWEY: Governor Dewey scored heavily last week when he attacked Soviet Russia, at the New York City dinner, and thereby forced Malik and Vishinsky to stalk out of the banquet hall, to the delight of those present. But it was not only the applause of the diners; it was also the bitter disapproval of Mrs. Roosevelt and others of the appeasement group which confirmed the deadly accuracy of the Governor's aim. Dewey, in this wise, lifted himself back several rungs up the rather tall ladder which he must climb towards political rehabilitation in national politics. It is, of course, natural for persons to ask caustically why Dewey did not talk this way in 1948? But, at least, from the standpoint of smart public relations, the Governor deserves commendation. So few Republican figures have the slightest talent for waging war and scoring hits in the forensic field.

Indeed, hardly a week passes in Congress that the lack of such propaganda ability does not become evident. During the past week, several members of the press urged GOP leaders on the Hill to introduce a resolution of thanks to General MacArthur for his success in the Inchon landing. In the Administration, the White House pointedly did not do so -- only the ousted Louis Johnson, in a personal capacity, saluting the MacArthur achievement. Yet, the Republican leaders seemed unable to understand the necessity, in the political battle of "wits-and-words", of such a resolution.

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RE-ENTER THE PAC: Edna Lonigan reports -- The Members of Congress have bolted from Washington to return to their districts, and to campaign for the remaining five weeks in what they think is an old-fashioned American party battle. What they are going to meet is actually something quite different.

The essence of a Congressional or parliamentary election campaign is that the local voters are sovereign, and choose unaided the men they want to represent them. But, today American candidates for Congress are confronted by an unseen political

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combine which operates as a unit all over the United States, bringing all its resources to elect men who have the approval of a few national officials, and to defeat those who obeyed the dictates of their consciences or the will of their constituents. This combine is the CIO-PAC with its identical twin, the AFofL's League for Political Education.

The PAC and the political arm of the AFofL have no connection with the mass of Labor, except the connection of the ivy which slowly chokes the giant oak. It is unfortunate that the word "labor" is still used by their opponents. The PAC was clearly identified by the Dies Committee in 1944 as Communist controlled, really a branch of the Comintern. The PAC wielded great influence in the fourth term election of President Roosevelt, and in the choice of his Vice President and successor, Harry Truman, as it did on the 1944 Congress. Its spectacular success rested on its ability to get workingmen and their wives to register and contribute to their political program, and on their brilliant skill in writing pamphlets, posters, radio scripts, in simple dramatic form. This had been perfected by many of their writers in the WPA Arts projects, which the Communists took over as training schools.

The PAC was badly defeated in 1946 and went underground. The CIO removed some of its better known Communist officials in the organization but it has of course done virtually nothing to remove the brain trust that dominated the legal and publicity work of all CIO locals, from headquarters in Washington. Signs multiply that the PAC, in close co-operation with the AFofL political arm under Joseph Keenan, is going to surface in October for a bitter struggle for control of Congress.

Their chief aim this year is control of the Republicans by destruction of the "old guard". Their public opposition so far has been chiefly to Senator Taft whose Taft-Hartley bill curtailed some of their power. But the contest they probably put first is that in California between Richard Nixon and Helen Gahagan Douglas for the Senate seat. If they can defeat Nixon, they will win twice. For they will weaken the fight against subversive forces on Capitol Hill and at the same time place in the Senate a clever, ruthless woman who, under cover of Hollywood glamor, has tirelessly fought to carry on the objectives of the PAC. But every member of the Un-American Activities Committee, everyone who helped with Taft-Hartley, everyone in fact who resists PAC blandishments, is marked for political death on November 7.

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MARSHALL: Some devastating research and publicity has been given to General Marshall's statement, at the recent hearings on his appointment to head the Department of Defense, to the effect that he merely carried out, but had no previous knowledge of, his instructions to carry out the lethal China policy. Marshall said he was so involved in the Pearl Harbor investigation the week before he left, that his "instructions" were radioed to him at sea. But investigation of the facts produces quite another picture.

It was natural that Right Wing columnists -- such as John O'Donnell of the New York Daily News -- should seize on the Marshall statement and tear it to pieces with documentation. But what has set Washington agog is that the Left Wing Fair Dealish Washington Post should virtually give the lie to Marshall, should destroy the picture of Marshall, the good soldier, "his not to reason why". The Post in an editorial on September 21 -- possibly written by the Editor, Herbert Elliston, who is well-informed on the various moves in the China policy -- remarked: "The facts are that the Marshall assignment to China was, in Mr. Byrnes' words when he was Secretary of State, to bring Chungking (the Nationalists) and Yenan (the Communists) together and that, on the President's showing, General Marshall had his eyes open and his mind receptive when he accepted it."

In short, this makes it unanimous -- from Right to Left. That being so, why the uproar against Senator Jenner's attack on Marshall's veracity?

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Book Events

The Man of Independence, by Jonathan Daniels. Philadelphia: Lippincott. $3.75.
Reviewed by Walter Trohan.

Charles G. Ross, high school classmate of President Truman and now his press secretary, once remarked, rather cryptically, in the musty malt aroma of the National Press Club, that Harry S. Truman owed more intellectually to Max Lowenthal than any other man. For the first time, this book details the debt to this ubiquitous man of mystery, who has flitted in and out of Washington for 30 years.

One day early in 1937 Max took Harry by the hand ("with the secret feeling of a man offering a well earned accolade") to the home of the late Supreme Court Justice Louis D. Brandeis thus opening "a new world" to the farm boy who became a cog in the vicious Kansas City machine of Tom Pendergast. Mr. Daniels has the then Senator starry-eyed and sweating at the palms at meeting people "unlike those he had been accustomed to knowing in the politics and public service in Missouri".

Max, whose latest visit to Washington was in answer to a subpoena of the House Un-American Activities Committee on an unfruitful fishing expedition into his past and present associations, is revealed as the ghost writer of the Truman broadside against concentrated wealth and the bankers and lawyers in its service, which was so foolishly forgotten by conservatives when Truman succeeded to the White House. And it becomes clear that this same Mr. Lowenthal is the ghost behind the screams for civil rights and civil liberties which pour from the White House.

It was Lowenthal who passionately urged Truman to run for Vice President in the spring of 1944. At that time, a year before FDR's death and before the country had heard more than a ripple of rumor about his health, Mr. Truman partly turned down the prospect because "he had a daughter and the White House was no place for children", according to Lowenthal. Mr. Truman, who lived to change his mind, also said he was too poor to think about running and "he used an earthy American expression about the lack of both a pot and a window". This earthiness is captivating to Mr. Daniels.

In fact, everything about Mr. Truman is charming to Mr. Daniels, who was briefly press secretary to Roosevelt and Truman. Daniels is a southern newspaper editor and Democratic National Committeeman from North Carolina. He apologizes for laughing at Truman jokes and for taking a dim view of HST after FDR, but he makes up for it by treacly adulation of the man now in the White House.

In the flow of honey are some amazing items, which make this book absolutely essential reading. Truman is quoted as saying of Stalin at Potsdam, "He was as near like Tom Pendergast as any man I know." This fathered the later characterization on a transcontinental tour, "I like old Joe." Daniels tells that Truman offered his ten dollars to join the Ku Klux Klan, but withdrew -- and had his money refunded! -- at the last minute because he would not promise not to give jobs to Catholics who were comrades in his artillery battery. Daniels, who does considerable research and at times writes rather well, says that a former business partner tells a different story; that Truman actually joined the Klan in the latter's presence. However, this story is made doubtful by indicating that the partner nursed a grudge because Truman had had him jailed.

The refrain of the book is that while Truman was a member of the Pendergast gang he did not participate in or know of the corruption of the Pendergast machine. Assuming such be true, it would seem that Daniels leaves his hero open to wonderment as to whether the Chief Executive knows or understands what is going on now. One thing Mr. Daniels proves beyond the shadow of doubt and that is the following: once a man has polished one pair of boots he finds it easy to take on another no matter whose feet are in them.

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